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Urban Dream Capsule is life in a fishbowl

By KAISHI LEE
The Tattoo

SINGAPORE - Four men sealed inside a shop window for 15 days. Forget illusionist David Blaine, this is the *real* thing: Urban Dream Capsule, a performance art installation, has captivated the hearts of locals with their act. First created in 1996 for the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts in the Myer Melbourne windows, Urban Dream Capsule, an "arts-tronauts" group from Australia, has built capsules in places such as Sao Paulo in Brazil, London, Gent in Belgium and Chicago, to name a few.

They arrived in Singapore in late May, in conjunction with the annual Singapore Arts Festival's Outreach pro-

gram, and stayed inside the capsule for 15 days.

"We are inside the middle of cities, and shop windows are where people dream urban dreams of things we can have, life styles we are told we should have," wrote creative director Neil Thomas in a May e-mail interview on the inspiration behind their act.

Their performance is not radical, Thomas said.

"Personally I like to make art that challenges the norms, gives people space to think, to change, to wonder, to dream, but not to provoke or upset gratuitously," he said.

Every day is different and everything is spontaneous in the capsule where they eat, wash, shave, exercise, dance, cook, clean, interact and play to the public.

Do not expect any fights or

quarrels though - Thomas claims that they are too busy, tired and smart to fight or argue in the capsule.

He said he preferred a longer stay.

"It (the capsule) builds and builds over time, people become involved and return," Thomas said.

But for Urban to arrive in Singapore, it required four years of organization. Thomas evidently enjoyed the Singapore experience.

"Gosh, Singapore is a beautiful place from where we sit, the people are beautiful to look at, smiling faces and loving eyes," he wrote.

"The drunken tourists banging on the glass was pretty horrible, but the storm that woke us at five was amazing! There were complete drifts of water, land sliding across the square, and cars flying down

the road! There was also a guy who cycled from here to the zoo with a live python in a plastic bag tied under his seat."

Each place elicits a different response from the people who look at the capsule.

"It is challenging for the Singaporeans just to look in at us," Thomas said. "They don't know how to behave exactly. They are reticent to be personal, to talk about themselves or their lives."

In contrast to Singapore, which Thomas said lacked the interactive experience, was Brazil.

The South American nation, Thomas said, was "memorable for the audiences, their love of music, dancing and their uninhibited passion for life and the incredible softness of the people."

While inside the capsule, Thomas said he missed his son, fresh air, riding his bicycle and rain. He said he wished to find Singapore's funky clubs and go dancing, check out a few trees and buy some new underwear immediately after getting out.

While most have been captivated by Urban's similarity to reality TV, Thomas said unabashedly that though he almost got involved in Australian Idol, the capsule is better.

"Reality TV on the whole isn't good; I think it has lost the drift," Thomas said.

"It's a shame when there is so much that could be and should be said about the world and people and where we are going on every level," said Thomas. "This should be the place for it, rather than trivial competing."

Some said Urban was making a statement.

"We are way beyond that!" Thomas replied. "We are involved in a process, an investigation, a journey into unknown territory on many levels and always tightly integrated into the local environment in which we are sited where everyone creates something together."

Indeed, such is Urban Dream Capsule's global appeal that it has been greeted with crowds and applause at the end of their stay.

"I think David Blaine made a big goof," said Thomas in the May interview. "He came out of it with egg on his face."

Urban Dream Capsule can only be the real thing.

Check out photos from the Urban Dream Capsule's time in Singapore at www.urbandream.com.

Mother-daughter duo spills the beans on teens

By KATE HAIRE
The Tattoo

Like most teenagers, I am tired of the stereotype placed on us that we like to rebel against everyone in our lives- parents, teachers, or basically any other higher authority.

It is said that teenagers will experiment with drugs, sex, and alcohol at an all-too-early age. A book discussion last Monday night at the Ethel Walker School for Girls supposedly set the story straight- from an interesting perspective.

Two perspectives, actually. Together, Doris Fuller and her daughter Natalie Fuller wrote "Promise You Won't Freak Out."

In the book, Natalie spills her teenage guts, telling all of our secrets. Her mom responds with her thoughts and opinions after every one of Natalie's passages.

Natalie's little secrets include how we sneak out at night, do drugs, drink alcohol, and have sex with our significant others at every chance we get.

And all this is if you're one of "the good kids," according to Natalie's mother. She later went on to say that every so-called "good" kid is really doing something behind their parents' backs.

But, luckily, the mother-daughter duo has written this book to help solve the communication problems that have plagued teenagers and their parents for centuries.

They covered a "myriad of subjects" in the book, Doris Fuller said.

The idea for the book came about, Doris Fuller said, after she caught Natalie spending the night at a boy's house when she was supposed to be at her friend's house for a sleepover.

"I had been totally clueless," Doris



Kate Haire / The Tattoo

Natalie and Doris Fuller speak in Simsbury last week.

Fuller said. She said she realized that she "had no clue what [her] daughter was doing."

Parents see their son or daughter as a perfect child who would never experiment with drugs, or drive home drunk from a party, Doris Fuller said.

"One of my closest friends was drinking too much," Natalie Fuller said. Later, Natalie's friend was date-raped by two of the girls' male friends.

Going to her mom for help would have been hard, Natalie Fuller said, since she wasn't supposed to be at the party in the first place.

"Sometimes we may not be ready to talk," the girl said.

Doris said she learned from Natalie that parents can keep a closer eye on their kids by simply calling to check up on them.

"Parents would know so much more if they checked up on us," spilled Natalie Fuller.

The teen advised parents to be sure to phone the home where their teenager is allegedly staying - to make sure that they're really there.

The key to any open relationship with a daughter or son is to be open, Doris Fuller said, and to share secrets with each other.

But why would teenagers want to share secrets with anyone ... let alone their parents?

"Everyone needs something private," Natalie Fuller said. But she said, "Some things do matter" and should be discussed with parents.

Natalie Fuller brought up one good point. Once you stop using lies to get what you want, life becomes less of a

hassle. "It really does make life easier," she explained to the teenagers in the audience. "It's easier to tell the truth than to lie."

It's more convenient to not have to cover up a trail, she said, or come up with more lies to keep your story going.

Her mother had much to say about how parents should attempt to get information out of their kids, which is something that teenagers might want to know, too.

After all, it's best to know what you're going to be up against if your parents read the book. Doris Fuller suggested that mothers start by talking about their child's friends. She said that teenagers will gossip about friends to their parents. Then, the story could turn into a question for their own child.

It's all about "asking the right questions, saying the right words," Doris Fuller said.

Asking personal questions directly can be startling to a teenager, and it could make them close up to any other conversation.

To my horror, Doris Fuller also suggested that parents break into their kids' instant messaging conversations and email to see what they've been doing.

"It's in their best interest," she said. So, what about your parents' wild days? They were teenagers once, right? What gives them the right to butt-in so much?

"Most of us did these things," said Doris Fuller, "but the risks were not as high as they are today!"

Doris Fuller was a big advocate for waiting to do or try things such as drugs, getting a tattoo, sex, and alcohol.

"Later is better," she said. But she went on to say that she was happy that Natalie tried these things in high school as opposed to college because

News with a view

she was still there to protect her, as a safety net.

Doris Fuller said if she could change one thing about how she raised Natalie, she said that she would have "been clearer earlier" on her values for her daughter.

Because Natalie was "a good kid," her mom assumed too much. "I had no reason not to believe her."

Parents who attended this discussion came away with an altered view about how all teenagers act. It was just another way to stereotype all teenagers into one more drug-loving, sex-having, alcohol-drinking group.

Yes, there are teenagers who do these things. But one thing that Doris Fuller said at the beginning of the talk really stuck with me. She said they were now going to talk about "what all 'good' kids are doing behind their parents' back!"

Doris Fuller, you're wrong. I'm sure that more than one 'good' kid is reading this article - and doesn't partake in those activities.

This book discussion was supposed to bring out the truth - and the views of teenagers and their parents. It was to better communication between the adults and teenagers. Instead, our generation was burdened with even more stereotypes.

Perhaps there was a communication error between mother and daughter, but I feel as though Doris Fuller's ideas would only work for teenagers like Natalie.

Gosh! It's dynamite!

By KATE HAIRE
The Tattoo

If you've ever felt like you don't quite belong, you may very well relate to the movie "Napoleon Dynamite."

The movie opens with creative credits that don't leave you bored to tears, and the film is so funny that it will almost drive you to tears.

At the movies

"Napoleon Dynamite" tells the tale of a high school boy who lives with his grandmother and doesn't quite fit in with anyone. His suave uncle comes to look after Napoleon and his 32-year old brother after their grandmother got hurt in a dune-buggy accident, while on vacation with her boyfriend.

Sure sounds like a typical teenage day to me. The movie goes on to portray modern taboos such as online dating, bullying, glamour shots, and being the new kid in school. This movie is far from typical - but that only adds to its artistic beauty.

The humor in the film is a little random, and that helps keep you on your toes through the flick.

Just as the first line in the movie does, you'll be asking yourself, "What is Napoleon going to do next?"

Napoleon only responds, "Whatever I feel like, GOSH!" which you'll see, becomes his catch phrase. He can be a little hostile at times.

There are lessons to be learned from "Napoleon Dynamite" though.

The uncle that watches Napoleon and his brother constantly asks, "What if you could go back in time ... would you do it all over?" He swears that things would be completely different. He would be the star player of a football team. He still practices football and even videotapes himself, and takes every opportunity to show everyone the clips.

The lesson to be learned here is that you can't continue to live in the past. Even the online dating works out for Napoleon's brother, who moves out of the house to be with LaFanda, his (as he puts it) "soul mate."

Napoleon's troubles are eventually resolved too, with a sweet ending that ties everything together nicely. Who knew tetherball could bring people so close together?

"Napoleon Dynamite" is a quirky and artsy film that the misfits of high school will keep close to heart. You'll find yourself quoting this movie's abundance of one-liners and funny scenes, and maybe even having a new respect for the school's loser.

Rockers aim guitars at Bush

By ALKHANSA EL-BEDAWI
The Tattoo

Aiming to help unseat President George W. Bush, a group of musical artists are voicing their opinions and concerns through a concert tour of the electoral "swing-states" starting Friday.

Artists on the Vote for Change tour include Bruce Springsteen, Pearl Jam, James Taylor, Jurassic 5, Bright Eyes, the Dixie Chicks, Babyface, Dave Matthews Band, R.E.M., and many others.

What I say

Ralph Nader in 2000, but this election, his support is behind Democrat John Kerry.

"We have to get a new administration in first," Vedder told *Rolling Stone*. "Then we can go back to the ideals that [Nader] was fighting for four years ago, and still is."

"At some point, you can't sit still," The Associated Press reported Vedder saying at the tour's announcement. "You can't spend your whole life, when people are getting killed, without asking serious questions about why."

The Vote for Change tour will include 34 shows in 28 cities over the course of one week, with concerts in Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Iowa, North Carolina, Florida, Wisconsin and Ohio.

Proceeds from the concerts will go to MoveOn Political Action Committee and America Coming Together, two liberal organizations working to elect Kerry and other progressive candidates.

Let's face it - people will pay more attention to what a celebrity has to say

rather than the average person, so it is great to see these artists taking advantage of that.

However, their efforts to rally pro-

Kerry voters to unseat Bush in the elections in November did not go unnoticed by supporters of the president.

Natalie Maines of the Texas-based Dixie Chicks faced boycotts and even threats last year for telling a European audience, "Just so you know, we're ashamed the President of the United States is from Texas."

But later, she told E! Online, "We are compelled to do what we can to inspire other voters to get involved in this year's election."

While some dubbed the artists on this tour unpatriotic, and two Dallas radio stations took the Dixie Chicks' Grammy-winning album *Home* off their play lists, this coalition of artists still adheres to their

beliefs.

Springsteen, one of the headlining artists on this tour who had supported U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, but whose support for Bush waned with the invasion of Iraq, spelled out his views in an op-ed piece for *The New York Times* last month.

"I felt I couldn't have written the music I've written, and been on stage singing about the things I've sung about for the last twenty-five years and not taken part in this particular election," wrote Springsteen.

In the *Times* piece, Springsteen asked readers a very thought-provoking question, "Why is it that the wealthiest nation in the world finds it so hard to keep its promise and faith with its weakest citizens?"

It is obvious that these artists are exercising their freedom of speech to its fullest extent, but are the things they are saying worth hearing?

Absolutely. Every American has the right to know what is happening in their own country; especially the things that aren't often spoken of, the things Bush and his administration would rather keep behind closed doors.

But how can those opposing the tour - people who consider themselves patriotic - argue that Bush has served his country well as president?

As long as thousands of American people must resort to sleeping on the streets while billions are spent sending space rovers to Mars, a change in leadership must take place.

"A vote for change is a vote for a stronger, safer, healthier America," said Dave Matthews in a statement on MoveOn.org. "A vote for Bush is a vote for a divided, unstable, paranoid America. It is our duty to this beautiful land to let our voices be heard."



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